

Dramatic Play in Trailblazers; Building Upon Children's Interests

At Hutch Kids we have a learn through play philosophy. One of the ways children experience learning through play here is through dramatic play. This looks different in each classroom, age group and child. To help our community understand the role that playing takes in children's learning we thought we would take a closer look at dramatic play in preschool, specifically the Trailblazer and Explorer classroom.



ANDREW, LEO, GARRETT, AND NOAH RETELLING THE STORY OF THE THREE LITTLE PIGS.

The Trailblazers and Explorers focused their curriculum on Fairy Tales during the months of December and January. One of the many activities that the teachers introduced during this time was reading and telling the story of Abiyoyo. This idea was inspired by child-initiated play. For example, on the playground the children wanted to play "Abiyoyo", each child taking on a different role to make the giant disappear. Some children played the role of dad, some the little boy. When this child-initiated game first began, all of the children always wanted Karen or another adult to play the part of Abiyoyo, the giant. After seeing initial engagement in taking on roles during outside play it was decided to bring more of this into the classroom.

The children were given multiple ways to continue with their exploration of Fairy Tales. This included bringing a puppet theatre into the room with different kinds of puppets and leaving the dramatic play section of the classroom very large, giving the children enough space to participate and create their own versions of different stories.

Talk of Fairy Tales continued. As time went on the children became more comfortable playing different roles outside. This included children being Abiyoyo, the giant, which no one wanted to play before. As the experience and opportunity was given over and over in multiple forms, in a safe environment, children experimented in different ways. This included children who are not normally seen as leaders taking on major roles in the play such as the giant.

As this play continued to expand, the teachers provided more structured time for children to take on these roles. During center time and during group gatherings the teachers talked about acting and plays.

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MARCH 2008

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WELCOME

Joining the Ducklings:

Benjamin Stevens, son of Jeff Stevens and Michelle Wurscher, brother of Isaac

Théodore Humbert, son of Olivier and Catherine Humbert

Joining the Sea Otters:

Michelle Li, daughter of Xuesong Yu and Jiangning Li

Joining the Rainforest Kids:

Claire Li, daughter of Xuesong Yu and Jiangning Li

An Update from the Hutch Kids Board of Directors

There are several sub-committees of the Board of Directors for Hutch Kids. These committees do the bulk of the work for the board throughout the year and this year's subcommittees are no exception. Below is an update from each of the committees.

The **Staff Appreciation Committee** would like to thank Hutch Kids parents for signing up and supporting Staff Appreciation Week. For those of you that may not be familiar with this program, The Board of Directors has organized Staff Appreciate Week as a small way to recognize and thank the HK staff and teachers for all that they do. Typically, a different family volunteers each week to do something special for the HK staff. Ideas that have been well-received in the past include lotions, drawings/cards



or children, snacks, tea/ground coffee, magazine or newspaper subscriptions, veggie or fruit platters, and cold medications. You don't need to spend a lot of money or do something every single day of the week – it's the thought that counts. Committee contact is Katherine Briant.

A sign-up sheet is posted on the counter in the lobby of Hutch Kids. Based on feedback from parents over the past two months, you now have the option to team-up and coordinate your efforts with another parent/family for a week - the sheet will have two slots per week.

The **Food Committee** has been very busy this year. See Nancy's article on page 5 for an update on changes to snacks at Hutch Kids and the work that the Food Committee has performed.

The **Fundraising Committee** ended 2007 with a bang as money was raised with a successful craft fair, the Amazon Associates program, the e-scrip program, and logo sales. Many thanks to everyone who volunteered and/or bought something! We're still waiting on exact year-end figures since deposits to our account aren't made at the same time from all sources. We'll keep you posted.

For the coming year, the board is considering how to kick things up a notch, possibly by holding a large campus-wide annual fundraising event for Hutch Kids. The goal would be to raise much more money than now through a single, short-term effort. This event, if approved, may end up reducing our reliance on, though not necessarily taking the place of, our smaller fundraising efforts. Committee contact is Glenn Hampson.

The **Social Committee** is responsible for orchestrating events such as the Home Harvest Festival, which was a great success this past November thanks to help from lots of parents. We also recruit parent volunteers to staff events such as the Craft Fair, Logo Sales, and parent-coverage of classrooms for teacher training sessions. We are currently working on a plan to facilitate more frequent informal social events hosted by YOU. Would you like to meet up with other HKCC families for outings to the zoo, parks, ride the monorail, and more – things you would do with your kids anyway but would be that much more fun by adding some Hutch Kids friends to the mix? Sounds like fun, right? Right! Please contact Lori Kenyon at (lkenyon@fhcrc.org); Liz Briesemeister (lbriesem@fhcrc.org); or Lisa Johnson (ljohnso@fhcrc.org) with suggestions for outings, advertising, planning, or if you would like to host an event.

The **Welcome Committee**, formerly called the Host Family Committee, has been working to improve the timeliness with which new families get welcomed to Hutch Kids. To that end, committee members have updated

the new family contact form and are working closely with Hutch Kids Administration to obtain these forms as soon as families submit them. Committee members welcome feedback from new families who have recently received a welcome call. Please feel free to contact Kathy Briant at kbriant@fhcrc.org or 206-667-1137.

The **Playground Committee** is a new committee established to address the outdoor needs of the center. Our immediate focus will be on creating an outdoor space appropriate for the infant program. We are looking for parents who are interested in helping with research, design or construction aspects of this initial project. Please email me at emily@lilimade.com if you are interested with dates and times that you could meet.

We encourage parents to get involved in these committees to learn more about the operations of Hutch Kids and the Board. Contact the people listed with the committees above or Steve Johnson (288-1287 or sjohnson@seattlecca.org) for more information.

Hutch Kids Values:

Acceptance
Accountability
Collaboration
Community
Effective/Constructive Communication
Professionalism
Respect
Openness
Supportive
Integrity

~The above is the core set of values that Hutch Kids Staff created to serve as the foundation for the work that is done with children, families and co-workers each day.

Observation and Documentation of Children's Learning

Play is considered the *work* of young children. When we watch children, we see the excitement of scientists in the midst of new discoveries. We come to understand that while playing, children are investigating the properties of physics and

mathematics, social interactions and negotiations. As they pursue questions and hypotheses, trying out their ideas over and over again, they are mastering new understanding and skills. Looking below the smears and clumps of paint and play dough, we see budding artists, architects, engineers and chemists, exploring how materials feel, look, move, combine and transform. Children learn from and then use these sensory experiences to represent their ideas and feelings with designs, drawings, sculptures and drama. Paying attention to children's boisterous bodies and loud voices, we realize the skill, competence, self-esteem, and joy that come from running, jumping, climbing and shouting.

Young children need to be noticed and their activities and interests valued and supported. We as early childhood professionals have an obligation to promote play and its learning opportunities. Our primary role as teachers is to observe in detail what children do.

Collecting stories of children's activities and relaying them through documentation and observations offers a method and motivation to pay closer attention to the value of children's play. As we focus more on children and their activities, we better know and plan for each individual child. We learn more about child development theory

because we see it in action.

One tool we use for observation and curriculum planning are the individual children's portfolio books. The model for the portfolios continues to evolve, each modification in style or practice designed to foster deeper understanding of the children we care for and support the development of curriculum that serves each child's individual needs and the needs of the particular classroom community.

For the 2007-2008 classroom year, slight modifications in the model were made, reducing the number of observations to be recorded, but adding a copy of the monthly summary of the classroom curriculum. Meanwhile, we've been studying the interrelatedness of developmentally appropriate practices, keen observation, classroom environments and routines which support children's explorations and construction of knowledge, Washington state's guidelines regarding children's development (the Benchmarks), curriculum development, documenting children's growth, and fostering strong partnerships between families and caregivers.

One outcome of this work has been a modification of the portfolio system and a different way of recording children's experiences. Beginning in the next few weeks, you'll start to see postings using the new observation format. These may be added to the parent information areas within each room, displayed elsewhere in the classroom, or

posted in the common spaces at Hutch Kids. The new observation model will also replace the template we've been using for the portfolio pages.

Our newly adopted documentation will be an ongoing journey. We expect there to be further refinements and modifications as we embrace this different format; finding what works well and where there is need for improvements or adjustments.

Collecting these stories for documentation requires that teachers have time to watch,

take notes and reflect on activities and interactions among children. Already, we've made changes in the way we rotate the use of shared spaces (i.e., the A,B,C,D Day Schedule) and

we've been examining our physical environments.

Classroom teaching teams will meet together regularly with their team leader to discuss the observations, and more importantly, how this new tool is supporting teachers in their work to create classrooms and experiences which reflect our vision, making Hutch Kids a place where *joy, play, and learning are celebrated*.

Submitted by Celeste Alfred

References:

- Curtis, D. and Carter, M. (1996) *Reflecting Children's Lives*
- Curtis, D. and Carter, M. (2003) *Designs for Living and Learning*

Hutch Kids Child Care aspires to be a child-centered community of learners where children, their families and educators work in concert with one another. This partnership creates a trusting, nurturing and reciprocally supportive environment where joy, play and learning are celebrated.
-Hutch Kids Vision Statement



HAVING STUDIED A BIT ABOUT FOSSILS AND GIVEN A SIMPLE TOOL, SARA SEARCHES FOR DINOSAURS (RAINFOREST KIDS, DEC. 2007)

Disaster Preparedness Plans

Hutch Kids, in partnership with FHCRC, developed the following plan for emergency situations. This information is always available for families and staff members and is periodically distributed to all members of the Hutch Kids community.

The purpose of our policy is three-fold:

1. To reassure all involved that we have a plan and that we are as prepared as possible for unforeseen emergencies
2. To reduce confusion and redundancy in the event of an earthquake emergency
3. To maximize efficiency and life saving potential

Each classroom or classroom pair has an emergency supply backpack. Supplies are also stored in the blue barrel in the storage room downstairs and in the cabinet near the elevator on the first floor. Supplies for the school include:

first aid kits ponchos dust masks
crow-bars hard hats flashlights
ice packs rope light sticks
water and food solar blankets
gas shut-off wrench port-o-potties
battery operated radios work gloves

For Hutch Kids Parents:

Parents are expected to be prepared with their own supplies and not rely on Hutch Kids' supplies if at all possible.

Fire drills are conducted monthly and earthquake drills quarterly. The drill procedure for earthquakes varies depending on the age of the children in the classroom. As much as they are able to understand, children are taught to move away from windows, drop, and cover.

1. Every child at HK is recommended to have a personal comfort bag containing a family photograph, a small comfort item (a lovie or blanket) and any other item of personal relevance. These items will be kept in zip-lock bags within the child's classroom.
2. In the event of an earthquake, parents are asked NOT to call HK. The phone lines will probably be down. If you are unable to come directly to HK, and want to determine the

status of the emergency, please attempt to call the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center command center, 667-6000, which will provide information relevant to HK.

3. We will be staying in the HK building until told differently by the FHCRC Incident Commander. If we are instructed to move to another location, we will leave a note, on the main entrance, stating when we left and where we have gone.
4. The Red Cross recommends that people stay put until given an "all clear" because of hazards possibly encountered while en route to HK. If you do leave your work place, please leave written and verbal notification of when you left and your destination. If coming to HK, please remember to bring your own emergency kit as food and supplies will be limited.
5. If you are able to pick up your child, you will be asked to sign out with the following information: date and time of departure, address of where you are going, and message to spouse or partner.
6. Hutch Kids will remain open and staffed until every child has been picked up. If for some reason we suspect that something has happened to a parent or guardian and he/she will be unable to come for the child, arrangements MAY be made for a staff member to take the child home.
7. In the event that an earthquake happens when HK is closed, please call the FHCRC Incident Commander BEFORE bringing your child into HK. Even for a small tremor, do not assume that Hutch Kids will be open.

Responsibilities of the HK Director:

The following chain of command will determine who is in charge during an emergency. If one person in the chain is not at HK during the emergency, the responsibility will be passed on to the next person(s) on the list.

1. The Director of HK



2. The Assistant Director of HK
3. The Program Coordinator
4. The Team Leaders

The person in charge will follow the protocol listed below.

1. One person will be appointed to serve as the medical representative. This person will be relieved from his or her classroom to set up a first aid clinic in a protected area of the building. This person will be in charge of attending to the medical needs of the staff and children and has the authority to recruit additional qualified adults into medical services if necessary. A triage routine will be established and any medical care deemed necessary will be provided.
2. One person will be appointed as the facilities representative. This person will also be relieved of classroom duties and will tour the facility to assess damage and determine if there has been damage to the gas or electrical systems which would be of further danger. The area by the water heater will be checked first for signs of a gas leak. If necessary this person will turn off the gas main. The electrical main will also be assessed, and turned off if damaged or instructed to do so. As part of the tour of the center, he/she will instruct staff to remove any dislodged fixtures that are in danger of falling. This person is also responsible for listening to emergency information from the battery-operated radios and instructing staff as to the recommendations for where they should relocate their classrooms.
3. The person in charge will calmly tour the facilities and establish that a staff person is in place in each class-

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Menu changes



Have you heard that Hutch Kids has a "Food Committee"? It was formed in June as a direct result of the 2007 HK Parent Satisfaction Survey, and because some parents indicated a desire to improve the quality of snacks being served. In the early work of this committee, chaired by Heidi Unruh, we asked parents to share their wishes for what they thought the perfect snacks at Hutch Kids could be; for example, eliminating Trans-Fats, only serving whole grains, offering only organic dairy products, and not offering foods with sulfur or other preservatives.

In the beginning the idea of changing everything was daunting so we started slow! Children were already eating our snacks, the health department's nutritionist had raved about our snack menus, and we were maintaining a very tight budget. The first goal we set, and have since met, was to eliminate Trans-Fats from everything we serve. We pushed our vendor to offer more trans-fat free products, and we simply stopped ordering foods with trans-fats.

By early this fall, our snack menu was "TRANS-FAT FREE"!

We are now off and running with our second goal of providing more nutritional snacks! The existing menus were critiqued and items that were not consistent with our goal of providing healthier snacks were identified. We've already eliminated powdered cheese (for the mac-n-cheese), frozen hash browns, and many store-bought sauces. The canned fruits and vegetables are slowly being replaced with fresh fruits and vegetables; the Teriyaki Sauce, for example, is now made from scratch; and whenever possible we avoid the foods on the "Dirty Dozen" list (*i.e.*, apples, peaches, strawberries, etc.). We have also started serving a few completely new items, including baked sweet potatoes, pumpkin muffins, sesame noodles, brown rice, and fresh vegetables with white bean dip instead of ranch dressing.

Our progress may seem to be at a snail's pace, but making these changes

involves more than simply changing the printed menu. Before we can serve a new menu item, we must determine if that menu item and/or its ingredient(s) are an allergen or otherwise not servable to a child in our program. We currently have children enrolled with allergies to whey, wheat, dairy, soy, peanuts, fruits with pits, etc. There may also be additional unknown allergies that are yet to be determined so before a new menu item is introduced it is highly scrutinized. We want to offer mostly foods that ALL children can eat so that children with allergies (and/or documented food preferences) are able to enjoy the same snacks as the rest of the children in their group. In many cases we have been able to meet this goal; however, we are still challenged by it.

Although the HKCC Food Committee has agreed to meet less frequently as a whole, its members will continue to provide resources and offer expertise. The commitment to improving the quality of our snack menu is a testament to the significance of the partnership between parents and staff in ensuring that Hutch Kids continues to improve.

Submitted by Nancy Myles

Preparations for Unusual Circumstances

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room to assist and calm the children. Those needing medical attention will be directed to the impromptu clinic designated by the medical representative.

4. The person in charge will phone into the FHCRC command center to determine the extent of the emergency and learn the recommendations of the disaster response team. He/she will also leave a message as to the situation at HK. Response teams from Fred Hutchinson will come to Hutch Kids in the event of any emergency at Hutch Kids.
5. The person in charge will again tour the center, making changes and adjustments as necessary.

The Hutch Kids Staff:

Each caregiver will stay with or return to the group of children in his or her

care, calmly instructing the children to follow earthquake emergency guidelines. These will include, but are not limited to:

1. If inside—move away from glass and find a covered area such as a cubby or under a table. Stay alert for aftershocks and stay calm.
2. If outside—stay outside, clear of trees, glass or power lines.
3. Account for all children in the group. Determine if any children require medical attention and get them to the impromptu medical clinic.
4. Assess the physical situation of the classroom. Remove any objects from the walls or ceiling that could pose a danger during aftershocks.
5. In coordination with the Director, distribute supplies from barrels, real-



izing that food, water and batteries may need to last for several days.

6. Communicate with the person in charge as to the status of the classroom and to receive further instructions.

In addition to having an emergency plan, all Hutch Kids staff members are expected to have current first aid and CPR certification. These classes are often hosted on-site, and as space allows, enrollment is made available to our parent community as well.

Parents are encouraged to complete a copy of the Emergency Situation Letter (a part of each child's HK enrollment paperwork). Completed forms are included in the classroom emergency backpack. The letter includes space for families to leave a message for your child and information critical in an emergency.

Happy Anniversary

FEBRUARY

One Year

Olivia Albro
Kailey Dieker

MARCH

One Year

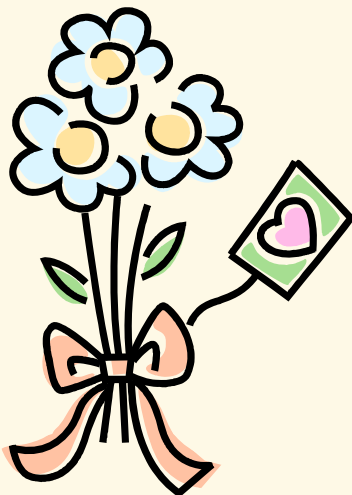
Allison Ayres
Brandi Hurd
Renee Washington

6 years

Toni Correia

9 years

Mike Sheehan



Congratulations!

A framework for Exploration

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

They also continued talk about Fairy Tales, encouraging children to re-tell and act out different stories in their own ways, thus incorporating a focus on literacy development. As time progressed the children and teachers talked about different ways to re-tell the story, which included acting. In order to become characters in the stories the children would need costumes. Making costumes then became part of the curriculum, therefore incorporating art and fine motor skills into the children's daily repertoire of activities. What was to come could never have happened without the children's lead and interest in taking on the roles in their free play.

The children and teachers decided to put on a play. The Three Little Pigs production was done as a continuation of Fairy Tale development and the children's interest continued to expand. Children who do not normally enjoy being the center of attention began to emerge and play the part of the Big Bad Wolf. Children who are normally leaders continued this role, but allowed other children to participate and even lent encouraging words to their peers. These opportunities to feel safe exploring different roles provided children with tremendous possibilities to grow in the areas of social and emotional development.

In addition to this the Trailblazers were then able to invite the children from other classrooms to see their play. As the play progressed other children were extremely excited to participate as well. They watched patiently a few times and then volunteered to play different roles such as the Big Bad Wolf or one of the Three Little Pigs. From this all of the children who participated learned to be respectful, to take turns and to do things that were outside of their normal com-

fort zone. This also provided time for the children to talk and think about being a part of a larger global community outside of themselves, their families and classroom.

As the Trailblazers continue to explore being part of a larger community, it is the perfect opportu-



SOFIA, CALVIN AND ZACHARY TAKE A TURN

nity to take them out of the building to see a play put on by someone else. So, they will do just that and wrap up the unit on Fairy Tales by seeing a production of Alice in Wonderland on March 13th at the Children's Museum.

As life continues on its ever winding path, please consider this: Hutch Kids as a whole team has put much effort, reflective thinking, time and energy into creating and now revitalizing its philosophy, vision and mission statement to continue to strive toward being a better place for children, our staff and families. With continued reflective thinking, what remains in the vision statement is this; "This partnership (between, children their families and educators) creates a trusting, nurturing and reciprocally supportive environment where joy, play and learning are celebrated." Leaving any one of these elements out would take away a critical part of what Hutch Kids strives to be.

Submitted by Sarah Larson

In play a child is always above his average age, above his daily behavior, in play, it is as though he were a head taller than himself.

-Lev Vygotsky